

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1-4, 6, 8, 11, 18 and 19 without prejudice;

Amend claims 5, 7, 9, 10, 12-17, as follows:

1 1. (Cancelled)

1 2. (Cancelled)

1 3. (Cancelled)

1 4. (Cancelled)

1 5. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus ~~as in claim 4 in~~

2 ~~which~~ comprising:

3 a contact member disposed for contacting an organ;

Al 4 a support structure attached to the contact member and including a plurality

5 of ball elements and interposed ring elements including contiguous engaged

6 surfaces assembled in an extended array, each of said ball and ring elements

7 including an internal bore therethrough, and including a flexible tensioning

8 element within the internal bore disposed to exert compressive force on the

9 assembled array of ball and ring elements to form a rigid support for the contact

10 member in response to tensioning the flexible member within the internal bore,

11 each of the ball elements includesing a segment of substantially spherical

12 configuration at each end thereof; and

13 each of the ring elements includesing at each of the ends thereof a plurality

14 of stepped edges oriented in concentric array at different radii from a central axis

15 of the internal bore therethrough in an array of such edges along the central axis
16 that form discontinuous contact surfaces arrayed about a substantially spherical
17 configuration to form the contiguous engaged surface thereof in mating
18 engagement with substantially conforms to the spherical segment of a mating ball
19 element.

1 6. (Cancelled)

2 7. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus ~~as in claim 1 in~~

3 ~~which a~~ comprising:

4 a contact member disposed for contacting an organ;

5 a support structure attached to the contact member and including a plurality

6 of ball elements and interposed ring elements including contiguous engaged

7 surfaces assembled in an extended array, each of said ball and ring elements

8 including an internal bore therethrough, and including a flexible tensioning

9 element within the internal bore disposed to exert compressive force on the

10 assembled array of ball and ring elements to form a rigid support for the contact

11 member in response to tensioning the flexible member within the internal bore,

12 each ball element includesing a segment of spherical configuration at an each end

13 thereof forming the contiguous engaged surface thereof for mating with a

14 contiguous engaged surface of an adjacent ring element, and includesing a

shoulder extending radially outwardly from the central bore to a dimension greater

15 than the maximum radius of the segment of spherical configuration for abutting an
16 adjacent ring element to limit angular orientation of the ball element relative to an
17 adjacent ring element.

1 8. (Cancelled)

1 9. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim 8 7 in
2 which each of the ring elements is formed of a resilient material.

1 10. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim ~~4~~ 7 in
2 which each ball element is formed substantially as a spheroid including an
3 equatorial band at greater radius than the spheroidal radius and oriented
4 substantially coaxial to a central axis of the internal bore.

1 11. (Cancelled)

1 12. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus as in claim ~~11~~ 7 in
2 which ~~one of the lateral bar and~~ contact member is attached to the tensioning
3 element and is disposed in rotatable orientation within a mating lateral groove in a
4 distal end of the assembled array of ball and ring elements for angular adjustment
5 of the contact member about an axis transverse to the tensioning element.

1 13. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for stabilizing a patient's organ at a
2 surgical site, comprising:

3 a contact member including a solid surface disposed to be positioned adjacent
4 the organ, and including a layer of textile material disposed on a the solid surface to
5 contact a surface of the organ that includes fabric material of a selected thickness in
6 a range between about .015 inches and about .064 inches; and
7 a supporting structure attached to the contact member.

1 14. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for stabilizing a patient's organ at a
2 surgical site, comprising:

3 a contact member including a solid surface disposed to be positioned adjacent
4 the organ, and including a layer of textile material including rayon fibers disposed
5 on a the solid surface to contact a surface of the organ; and
6 a supporting structure attached to the contact member.

1 15. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for stabilizing a patient's organ at a
2 surgical site, comprising:

3 a contact member including a solid surface disposed to be positioned adjacent
4 the organ, and including a layer of non-woven fibrous textile material disposed on a
5 the solid surface to contact a surface of the organ; and
6 a support structure attached to the contact member.

1 - 16. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus comprising:

2 a contact member including a solid surface disposed for contacting an organ
3 and including a layer of textile material including non-woven rayon fibers on a the
4 solid surface of the contacting member disposed for positioning adjacent the organ.

1 17. (Currently Amended) Organ stabilizing apparatus comprising:

2 a contact member including a solid surface disposed for contacting an organ
3 and including a plurality of layers of fibrous textile material on a the solid surface
4 of the contacting member disposed for positioning adjacent the organ.

1 18. (Cancelled)

1 19. (Cancelled)